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## Tri-Met Measure 26-74: South/North Light Rail

City Club of Portland (Portland, Or.)

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# Tri-Met Measure 26-74: South/North Light Rail

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**CITY  
CLUB**  
OF PORTLAND

Your Committee Found:

We do not realistically have an option to do nothing in response to the rapidly increasing traffic congestion and growth in our region. The key task before us is to select a response that implements the planning we have done, is cost effective both initially and over its operating life, helps to shape the development of our region, and reflects broad community involvement in its design. The ability of light rail to move significant numbers of people at a lower operating cost combined with its ability to shape the development of our region convinces us that it is both a viable and desirable response to our land use and transportation challenges.

Several challenges to the current proposal have arisen, complete with alternative proposals. We have reviewed the alternatives and find that they involve economic, technical, or political obstacles that render them not viable. We regret that it was not possible for the current South/North Light Rail proposal to serve the highly-congested Vancouver-Portland corridor. However, we believe it would be a mistake to delay development of the rest of the system until Vancouver and Clark County are ready to proceed.

Your committee believes that the South/North Light Rail proposal is a viable plan and that it is also a vital step in establishing a transportation network that truly serves the region.

**Your committee recommends a YES vote on Measure 26-74.**

The City Club membership will vote on this report on Friday, September 25, 1998. Until the membership vote, the City Club of Portland does not have an official position on this report. The outcome of this vote will be reported in the *City Club Bulletin* dated October 2, 1998.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ballot Measure 26-74 will appear on the ballot as follows:

**Caption:** AUTHORIZES ISSUING BONDS TOWARD FINANCING  
SHORTENED SOUTH/NORTH LIGHT RAIL

**Question:** Shall Tri-Met issue \$475,000,000 general obligation bonds—if matching federal funds are approved—toward financing South/North light rail? If the bonds are approved, they will be payable from taxes on property or property ownership, that are not subject to the limits of sections 11 and 11b, Article XI of the Oregon Constitution.

**Summary:** In 1994, voters authorized issuing the same amount of bonds for almost the same purpose. That proposal included a link to Vancouver. This one does not. Because of this change, Tri-Met must seek voter approval to sell the bonds. The scale of the project will change from 21 miles to 16 miles, and it will terminate in Kenton district rather than Vancouver. Project estimated to cost \$1.6 billion.

This proposed line would begin at Clackamas Town Center, follow Highway 224 through Milwaukie, cross Willamette River on a new bridge near Caruthers, proceed from PSU down present transit mall to Union Station, cross Steel Bridge, and go north along I-5 and Interstate Avenue. (Final route may vary.)

Project may be built in phases. No bonds will be sold unless federal funds are approved. Also, other affected localities will be asked to contribute. These general obligation bonds will mature in 30 years. They will contribute to financing, acquisition, and construction costs.

Estimate average annual cost to taxpayers will be \$25.00 per \$100,000 assessed valuation.

(The language of the caption, question, and summary was prepared by a Multnomah County Circuit Court judge and agreed to by Tri-Met Counsel after the wording of an earlier ballot title prepared by the Tri-Met Board was challenged in court.)

City Club chose to study Measure 26-74 because of the large amount of public money involved—\$475 million toward the total project cost of \$1.6 billion—and because the significant and long-term impact the project could have on future development in the Portland metropolitan region. This report provides background material on Measure 26-74, presents statements for and against the measure, and analyzes important and complex issues raised by the measure. The report closes with the committee's conclusions and recommendation.

Your committee met several times over the course of six weeks to study this measure. Committee members were screened prior to their appointment to the committee to ensure that no member had an economic interest in the outcome of the study or had taken a public position on the subject of the measure. The committee interviewed South/North Light Rail proponents, Tri-Met and Metro staff, and some of the most visible and vocal critics of the measure, including individuals who support light rail but do not support this particular project, and individuals who oppose any publicly-funded light rail project (see Appendix A for list of people interviewed by the committee). The committee also reviewed a number of relevant articles, reports, and other materials (see Appendix B for a list of resource materials).

## II. BACKGROUND

Ballot Measure 26-74 is a \$475 million dollar bond measure referred by the Tri-Met Board to the voters in Tri-Met's service territory (the urbanized areas of Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties). The measure would provide about 30 percent of the \$1.6 billion required to build the proposed 16-mile South/North light rail line. The line would extend from the Clackamas Town Center to the Kenton Business District in North Portland. This is the third time in the last four years that voters have been asked to approve funding to build a south-north light-rail line. In each case, a majority of participating voters in the Tri-Met service district voted to support the funding proposals. This measure is before the voters at this time because the extent of the proposal has been reduced and therefore requires confirmation. A decision to proceed with this proposal based upon the 1994 ballot measure would be open to a legal challenge which could delay the project.

### A. Basic Information

#### 1. What are the Project's Goal and Objectives

# CITY CLUB OF PORTLAND

The South/North Steering Committee—made up of eleven elected and appointed officials from the cities, counties and other government agencies in the South/North Corridor—established the goal and objectives for the South/North Light Rail Project (see Appendix C for a list of Steering Committee members). The project goal is:

*To implement a major transit expansion program in the South/North Corridor that supports bi-state land use goals, optimizes the transportation system, is environmentally sensitive, reflects community values and is fiscally responsive.*

The project objectives are to:

1. Provide high quality transit service.
2. Ensure effective transit system operations.
3. Maximize the ability of the transit system to accommodate future growth in travel.
4. Minimize traffic congestion and traffic infiltration through neighborhoods.
5. Promote desired land use patterns and development.
6. Provide for a fiscally stable and financially efficient transit system.
7. Maximize the efficiency and environmental sensitivity of the engineering design of the proposed project.

## **2. Where Would the Line Run?**

The proposed South/North Light Rail line would start in the south at Clackamas Town Center and run to Milwaukie, along McLoughlin, to OMSI, across the Willamette on a new Caruthers bridge, to PSU, down the downtown bus mall to Union Station, across the Willamette on the Steel Bridge, to the Rose Garden, along Interstate Avenue, to the Kenton business district. A future extension into Clark County was included in the overall plan but is not funded by Measure 26-74.

## **3. What Would It Cost? Who Would Pay for It?**

Tri-Met expects the project to cost \$1.6 billion. Tri-Met expects the funding to come from the following sources: \$475 million- Tri-Met Measure 26-74; \$125 million- City of Portland; \$50 million- Clackamas County; \$921 million- U.S. federal transportation funds; \$40 million- Tri-Met.

Officials from Clackamas County and the City of Portland have committed to help fund the project, however, they have not identified yet the source of the

## BALLOT MEASURE STUDY

funds or formally committed to a particular funding level. The federal government has included the South/North Light Rail project on a list of transportation projects that qualify for funding. Appropriation of the federal funds requires the completion of the final project environmental impact statement (completion expected by November 1998) and, more importantly, passage of Measure 26-74 and actions by Clackamas County and Portland that will show a local commitment to support the project.

### 4. When Would the South/North Line be Built?

Phase	Segment	Segment Length	Begin Construction	Begin Service
1	Rose Quarter to Milwaukie	10.7 miles	1999	2004
2	Milwaukie to Clackamas Town Center, and Rose Quarter to Kenton	5.7 miles	2004	2007
3	Kenton to Vancouver/Clark College (Not Included in Measure 26-74)	4.7 miles	Unknown	Unknown

The total proposed South/North Light Rail project is divided into three phases. Measure 26-74 only would provide funding toward Phases 1 and 2.

### B. A Brief History of Light Rail in Portland

Portland is no stranger to rail transit. An extensive system of street cars and interurban rail lines served the Portland area during the first half of this century. This system was removed in the 1950s. During the 1950s, a national program of freeway construction shifted the focus of national and local transportation systems from transit to automobile use. In the 1960s, concerns over negative impacts of automobile use and development patterns on the environment, air quality, and regional planning led the U.S. Congress to begin to move away from the strong emphasis on automobile transportation and to pass laws and initiate programs to encourage the development of mass transit systems in cities across the nation. Subsequent federal, state, and local laws and policies have played a major role in shaping the Portland region's transportation and land use choices.

## CITY CLUB OF PORTLAND

In 1969, the Oregon Legislature created the Tri-County Metropolitan Service District of Oregon (Tri-Met) to take over operation of Portland's ailing private mass transit system. Federal directives and local concerns over air pollution, traffic congestion, and energy use led to a desire to provide alternatives to automobile transportation. In response, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) developed a regional transportation plan that proposed express mass transit facilities in the Barbur, Sunset, Vancouver, Banfield, and Oregon City corridors. ODOT reviewed a range of transit options for the Banfield corridor that included building separate busways or a light rail system. The abandonment of the proposed Mt. Hood Freeway in the late 1970s freed up over \$200 million of federal transportation money. These funds were used to pay for the design and construction of a new light rail system from downtown Portland to Gresham.

Oregon's state land use laws, passed in the 1970s, added to the pressure for mass transit planning. Oregon's laws required local jurisdictions to develop comprehensive plans that would accommodate growth within urban growth boundaries and establish a strong link between transportation and land use planning.

In 1986, Tri-Met opened Portland's first modern light rail line, Eastside MAX, which ran 15 miles from downtown Portland to Gresham. The project cost \$214 million, 83 percent of which was federal money and 17 percent state and local. Early planning envisioned a future system of east/west and north/south light rail lines that would serve the region. Planning soon began for another light rail line for the Sunset Corridor.

In 1990, voters approved funds to build Westside Light Rail from Portland, through Beaverton, to Hillsboro. In 1991, the Oregon State Land Conservation and Development Commission passed the Transportation Planning Rule (TPR). The TPR, strengthened the requirements for local governments to target future development in ways that encourage transit use.

In 1992, regional voters adopted the Metro charter, which required Metro to prepare a 50-year vision for the region and to develop a plan to accommodate growth within the Urban Growth Boundary. Metro completed the 2040 Regional Framework Plan in December 1997. In the plan, Portland's Central City is designated as the high-density employment hub of the region with light rail links to "regional centers" to the east (Gateway and Gresham), west (Beaverton and Hillsboro), to the south (e.g. Clackamas, Milwaukie, Oregon City), and to the north (Vancouver's City Center). The plan envisions high

density mixed used development in “station communities” located around light rail stations in the region.

In September 1998, the 18-mile Westside MAX opened. The project cost \$963.5 million (75 percent federal funds, 25 percent state and local).

### C. South/North Light Rail Project History

Planning for a North/South light rail line began in the early 1990s. Measure 26-74 is the latest in a number of opportunities voters have had to vote on whether to fund a south/north light rail line.

**1994:** Voters in the Tri-Met service district approved 1994 Measure 26-13—a \$475 million bond measure—to build a 26-mile light rail line from Clackamas County into Clark County Washington. The measure did not specify a particular route for the project. The Tri-Met measure represented only one piece of the proposed funding package. Other contributions were anticipated from Clark County, the State of Washington, the State of Oregon, and the federal government. The measure was approved by 73 percent of the participating voters.

**1995:** In 1995, Clark County voters rejected (2 to 1) a ballot measure that would have raised \$237 million for the Washington State portion of the South/North Light Rail line. This project included a nine-mile extension north to Hazel Dell.

**1996:** Following the Clark County defeat, Tri-Met and Metro restructured the project and in August of 1995, the Oregon Legislature passed a \$750 million transportation package. The package included \$375 million in lottery-backed bonds for the South/North Light Rail project and \$375 million for rural transportation projects around the state. Opponents of the package gathered enough signatures to refer the package to voters as 1996 State Ballot Measure 32. In November 1996, Oregon voters rejected the legislative package. While the measure failed statewide (only 44 percent of voters supported the measure), it was approved by 64 percent of the voters within the Tri-Met service territory. Faced with the Clark County and statewide defeats, Tri-Met planners turned to the development of a revised proposal that would not include light rail service across the Columbia River to Vancouver and would not rely on funding from the State of Oregon.



# CITY CLUB OF PORTLAND

1998: In August 1998, the Tri-Met Board voted to put Measure 26-74 before Tri-Met Service District voters on the November 1998 ballot. The Tri-Met Board called for a new vote on the South/North Light Rail line funding because the project no longer included an extension to Clark County as provided for in the 1994 proposal. An attempt to build the currently proposed project under the previous authorization likely would have lead to court challenges that might have delayed the project for two or three years, threatening Tri-Met's ability to qualify for federal money during the current funding cycle.

## D. How does the current project differ from the project proposed in 1994?

- The previous proposal served Vancouver and Clark County. The current proposal stops at Kenton, three stations short of the Columbia River, and does not serve the City of Vancouver or Clark County. An extension over the river is contemplated as a possible third phase of the project, but is not included in the current proposed funding package.
- The total South/North Light Rail project budget has been reduced from \$2.8 billion to \$1.6 billion.
- The current proposal does not include funding from the States of Oregon and Washington, or Clark County, but does include funds from Clackamas County and the City of Portland.

The funding sources have also changed significantly since 1994, as shown below.

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>1998 S/N Light Rail</b>	<b>1994 S/N Light Rail</b>
Federal Transit financing	\$921 million	\$1,400 million
Tri-Met Service District	\$475 million (1998 BM 26-74)	\$475 million (1994 BM 26-13)
Tri-Met (interest on bonds)	\$40 million	N/A
City of Portland	\$125 million	N/A
Clackamas County	\$50 million	N/A
Vancouver	N/A	\$237 million
State of Oregon	N/A	\$475 million
State of Washington	N/A	\$238 million
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1.6 billion</b>	<b>\$2.8 billion</b>

## E. Why Light Rail?—Population Growth, Traffic Congestion, and Air Quality

The population of the Portland metropolitan region is growing rapidly—so is traffic congestion on the region's roadways. The South/North Corridor Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) states that the region's population has grown by approximately 45 percent over the past twenty years from 1,100,900 residents in 1975 to 1,596,100 in 1995. Metro's Regional Framework Plan anticipates an additional 720,000 new residents in the metropolitan area over the next 50 years.

More people and regional growth will lead to more use of the roadways. By the year 2015, growth in population and employment in the corridor is projected to lead to a 64 percent increase in vehicle miles traveled. This will generate a 268 percent increase in the miles of congested roadway and a 720 percent increase in the amount of hours drivers will sit in congested traffic. In August 1998, Metro released a new study that predicts significantly increased congestion throughout the region—even with large investments in roads and mass transit (including completion of the South/North Light Rail project). Metro predicted the greatest congestion problems in the Clackamas County area, where expansion of the urban growth boundary is likely to lead to significant population increases.

Traffic congestion on the roadways increases travel times for all forms of public transit that use the roadways. Tri-Met expects that future increases in traffic congestion will extend transit service hours, operating costs, and the size of the bus fleet needed to maintain the current level of service. This would ultimately decrease Tri-Met's operating efficiency.

Additional important concerns are the significant negative impact of automobile emissions on the region's sometimes poor air quality, and the increasing importance of protecting regional waterways from the negative impacts of contaminated runoff from the region's roadways.

### III. ARGUMENTS PRO AND CON

#### A. Arguments Advanced in Favor of the Measure

The South/North Light Rail Line will carry 42,000 riders on each weekday thereby reducing auto travel, reducing the need for 2,200 parking spaces in downtown Portland, reducing travel times and taking more drivers off the road than would an all-bus system.

South/North Light Rail will result in approximately 14 fewer lane miles of congested roadway in the region per day in 2015. Commuters in cars will spend approximately 4,400 fewer hours stalled each day in rush hour traffic.

Since the rail line is separated from roadways for most of its length, it will be more reliable and faster than congested roadways.

The South/North line will help complete the rail system in the Portland area, having a synergistic effect on transit usage throughout the region.

Light rail reduces the need to incur the additional costs and impacts of highway construction.

The light rail system will help direct the future growth and development of the metropolitan area in accordance with the region's 2040 Plan.

The South/North Project will attract local private development and leverage public funds to help meet the regional goals of attracting higher use development in major activity centers.

The South/North Project will provide light rail access to over 400 acres of developable land.

Development of the light rail system is an investment in the future. Delaying will increase costs and will negatively impact the growth and economic development of the region.

## BALLOT MEASURE STUDY

Failure to approve this measure will make it difficult or impossible to get access to the large amount of federal funding needed to move forward on any major transportation projects in our region for a number of years.

### **B. Arguments Advanced Against the Measure**

The South/North Light Rail line will not reduce traffic congestion. Most commuting is suburb to suburb and will not be affected by light rail.

Traffic congestion can be dealt with more effectively and economically through other means.

An all-bus system is more economical, flexible and faster.

Tn-Met's and Metro's figures on projected ridership are not dependable.

Travel on light rail will not be faster than by car due to time spent getting to light rail stations and transferring from car or feeder buses.

Any increases in jobs will be more than offset by losses in the private sector due to the tax burden imposed by this measure.

Light rail does not encourage transit-related development. Little development resulted from the Eastside MAX, and development along the Westside MAX was attracted by local tax breaks not light rail.

Light rail is the right solution to help solve the region's transportation problems, but the South/North project funded by this measure is flawed and does not respond to the region's most pressing transportation needs.

## IV. DISCUSSION

Your committee identified three fundamental questions that Club members and voters need to consider when deciding how to vote on Measure 26-74:

- **Is light rail an appropriate transportation approach for the Portland metropolitan region?**
- **Is the South/North Light Rail project proposed in Measure 26-74 an effective response to the region's needs?**
- **What happens if voters do not approve the project at this time?**

### **A. Is light rail an appropriate transportation strategy?**

The Portland metropolitan region is facing the prospect of significant population growth in coming years. Our region currently faces serious congestion problems and every projection of our future predicts that these problems will increase manyfold. The quality of life we so cherish is at risk. Your committee believes it will take action to address this issue—action informed by vision and tempered through experience.

The citizens and governments of this metropolitan area have, in effect, been preparing for such action for decades. From the twenty-five-year-old Downtown Plan to the recently completed Metro 2040 Plan, a regional transit network that complemented the roadway network has been a key element. Eastside MAX was initiated as a study focused on a busway as the primary mode of providing service. Light rail did not emerge as the preferred option until that study revealed that it would draw higher levels of ridership and be less expensive to operate. Tri-Met was created in 1969, precisely because the privately-held transit companies that preceded it were struggling to provide service. Each of these steps has at its core the goal of protecting and enhancing our quality of life.

A significant portion of the opposition to Measure 26-74 comes from individuals and groups who are generally opposed to the development of publicly-funded light rail and challenge the validity or desirability of the benefits reported by light rail proponents. Many are opposed to a large role for government in the community and oppose increases to the local tax burden, others challenge specific cost and benefit assumptions related to light rail.

The main focus of the campaign against Measure 26-74 by light rail opponents is their belief that light rail moves too few people, is too crowded, too slow, and too expensive to be an effective or cost-effective response to the region's transportation challenges. Another criticism is the "opportunity cost" of spending large amounts of local money on light rail—money which is then not available to address other pressing community needs, such as providing affordable housing.

As your committee has reviewed the written materials available and received testimony it has become apparent that enormous discrepancies exist between the claims made by the proponents and opponents. It has also become apparent that while some of these claims have undergone arduous scrutiny, others seem based in logic so convoluted that they defy either scrutiny or comparison. We have given more credence to the claims backed by arduous scrutiny and or supported by substantial material.

**Light Rail vs. Building a Freeway:** One example has to do with the cost of light rail versus the cost of expanding the roadways. Opponents claim that the cost of light rail far exceeds the cost of expanding the highways to serve the same need. However, the Oregon Department of Transportation has analyzed just such a scenario and found the opposite to be true. For example, developing a six-lane freeway—instead of the proposed light rail segment—from Clackamas Town Center to downtown Portland would cost \$3.24 billion. That is fully twice the cost of the entire South/North line. It would actually add significantly less capacity to the south segment and provide no relief at all to the north segment. In addition, the human cost in displaced home owners and businesses would be significant. Evaluation of a proposal to expand roadways to accommodate more car and truck traffic must also consider the added environmental costs of this additional traffic.

**Light Rail vs. Building Busways:** Another example has to do with the cost of operating light rail versus a busway. Opponents claim that it costs far less to provide comparable transit service with buses on a dedicated busway than with light rail (for which they cite costs over \$10 per ride.) In fact buses are more expensive, Tri-Met reports a current cost per rider for buses is \$1.70 and for light rail is \$1.56. However, projected busway ridership is 40 percent lower than light rail while operating costs would be significantly higher, particularly to serve the same number of riders. In addition, the number of buses required to achieve the same ridership as light rail would exceed the capacity of the transit mall and cause it to fail.

**Ridership:** Ridership projections are another example of discrepancy.

Opponents frequently cite that the Eastside light rail has never reached the original projection of riders per day. It is true that in 1974, in the shadow of the 1973 oil embargo, Metro did make an optimistic projection of 40,000 riders per day. It is also true that they were dealing with unknown territory and that as more data became available the Tri-Met models for projections became more reliable. A year prior to the opening of Eastside light rail those projections anticipated 19,000 riders on opening day. Actual ridership on opening day was 19,500 and has risen 60 percent, as predicted, to an average of 32,000. The Tri-Met models for predicting ridership have proven so reliable that they are used by the Federal Transit Administration as the standard that other agencies should strive to match. In addition, these projections undergo tremendous scrutiny by both expert panels and the Federal Transit Administration, which is very conservative in how it analyzes project benefits.

**Private Sector Options to Public Light Rail:** The Cascade Policy Institute (CPI), based in Portland, generally supports a smaller role for government and greater reliance on private sector solutions to community problems. CPI representatives told your committee that they oppose the construction of any sort of public light rail in the Portland metropolitan area and instead support free market solutions to the region's transportation and planning challenges. These free market solutions include:

- *Privatization and deregulation of public and private transportation, including rail systems, buses and taxis.* They advocate dissolving the current public transit service and allowing free market forces to develop alternate ways to serve the needs of the region at the least possible cost.
- *Congestion pricing/toll roads.* Roadways subject to significant congestion could be retrofitted with toll booths or cars could be equipped with transponders that would give access to the toll roads and result in a monthly bill. The cost of using the toll roads would increase during peak congestion periods but the congestion would be monitored.
- *Dedicated bus ways and increased bus service.* They contend that buses are faster, more flexible and less expensive to operate than light rail.

When expansion of the capacity of the transportation system is necessary, the Cascade Policy Institute advocates expanding roadways rather than developing light rail. The Cascade Policy Institute identified 10 criticisms of light rail echoed

by other light rail opponents. (A complete list of these criticisms and Tri-Met's responses to them are presented in Appendix D.)

Tri-Met and Metro representatives and other transit advocates told your committee that any private or public transportation solutions that utilize the region's increasingly congested road system—whether buses or deregulated types of taxis—will be slowed and delayed by the same congestion affecting other traffic using the roads. They also caution that total privatization of the transit system will serve the region in an uneven, fragmented and unpredictable manner.

When asked about the alternatives proposed by the Cascade Policy Institute, Tri-Met and Metro representatives and other transit advocates say that while elements of these private sector alternatives are in use to some degree in other cities around the world, no successful example exists in which a metropolitan area of comparable size and population to Portland has replaced its public transit system with some combination of these private sector alternatives.

Tri-Met and Metro representatives and other transit advocates say that Tri-Met's operating costs are largely a function of the cost of personnel to operate the equipment. Bus service on dedicated bus ways or lanes is much more expensive to operate than light rail because it takes many more drivers to move the same number of people with buses than with trains. One light rail train (two cars long) carries around 300 people (sitting and standing). A typical Tri-Met bus carries around 60 people (sitting and standing)

Your committee believes that the issue of congestion requires action and that only a solution which is independent of the current roadways can avoid being compromised by the very congestion it is meant to address. Two options are before us: busways and light rail. Independent busways cost virtually as much as light rail to construct. When choosing between these two options it is important to keep in mind that it takes five buses to equal the capacity of one light rail train and that buses cost more to operate than light rail. The initial cost of such systems always sounds huge but in the long term the operating costs are far more significant.

This region is in a state of transition in its fabric and structure. In the coming years, as people select both homes and places of employment for proximity to the Regional Centers recognized in the Metro 2040 Plan the need for and manner of commuting will change. The task for the future is to connect the Regional Centers with a system that promotes ready movement between them



so that traffic need not enter the roadway system or contribute to congestion. This transition will not happen overnight and indeed one of the factors that will shape it will be the frustration from the congestion we will face in the interim. Some measures such as tolls may indeed eventually come into play. But if new paths of movement, independent of the roadway are not established then there is virtually no hope of relief from the congestion we face now and anticipate in the future.

### **B. Is the Measure 26-74 South/North Light Rail project an effective response to our region's needs?**

A comprehensive system is required to meet the region's needs. It must readily move people to their destinations and must not destroy the places they cherish in the process. It must anticipate the movement patterns of the future and it must shape them into being. It must function effectively today and at every stage of its development. Light rail is not a stand-alone solution. It is one segment of an overall transportation plan with a very important role to play. Let us consider the comprehensive dimensions of this proposal.

Citizens for Better Transit, a local transit advocacy group, believes that light rail is a key component of the region's transportation system and that every effort should be made to maximize its effectiveness in serving the region's needs. CBT Representatives identify "Fundamentals of Successful Transit" that they say should guide the development of light rail, including:

- Rail transit should be built where there is already proven high demand for transit "... rail transit does not cause the high patronage, but that the high patronage causes rail transit".
- The system should move people at high speed: "speed is ... closely related to station spacing. The more frequent the stops, the slower the system speed."
- "The regional system, accommodating long trips, should have wide stop spacing and high speeds. For distribution they should tie into local systems having short station spacing and slow speeds."
- Two primary tools for expanding the capacity of the system are: 1) decreasing the interval of time between trains and; 2) making the trains longer.

They believe that the proposed South/North Light Rail project, as it is presently configured, violates all of these principles.

Tri-Met and Metro representatives and other transit advocates say that historical

development has followed transportation infrastructure be it harbors, rivers, trains or highways. Engineers have typically been the leaders of these projects with a "can do" attitude. But the results have not always enhanced the communities that we live in. What has been learned from that experience is the importance of linking land use and transportation decisions. The current light rail proposal is the result of working with each of the jurisdictions the line engages to arrive at an alignment that serves regional and local needs regarding transportation and land use issues.

For Citizens for Better Transit the current proposal has three flaws:

- Not building to Vancouver when the Portland/Vancouver corridor already has significant levels of transit ridership and demand.
- Building to Clackamas Town Center when there is little current demand for transit service between Portland and this suburban shopping mall.
- Running light rail on downtown streets which limits the speed and capacity of the system.

## **1. Failure to provide service to Vancouver.**

The Interstate 5 corridor from Vancouver to Portland is currently the most congested roadway in Oregon. Citizens for Better Transit believes that any plan to address transportation and congestion in this region that does not include this corridor is seriously flawed. They recommend extending the system across the river and a further seven blocks to the C-Tran Transit Center in downtown Vancouver. They say money could be made available within the original funding (1994 Measure 26-13) by altering the alignment in downtown Portland, only serving Clackamas County as far as Milwaukie and getting a commitment from C-Tran to shift operating capital to the light rail project. They recommend voting "no" on Measure 26-74 in November and proceeding with this alternate plan.

Tri-Met and Metro representatives agree that Vancouver and Clark County are an important part of the metropolitan area. They contribute significantly to the traffic levels in the region and constitute a logical component of any plan that addresses transportation and congestion in this area. For these reasons, they have been included in both the previous and the current alignment studies. However, the overwhelming failure of the 1995 Clark County light rail ballot measure suggests that there is neither a political mandate nor a funding mechanism in place that would allow extension of the system to serve Vancouver and Clark County at this time. The current South/North proposal incorporates provisions to allow ready extension to Vancouver and Clark

County when the political mandate and funding mechanisms are in place. Tri-Met and Metro representatives believe that the completion of the South/North Light Rail project and the proposed extension of light rail service to Portland International Airport will make a compelling case for Clark County voters to agree to extend light rail north across the Columbia River sometime in the future.

The need to serve the entire region's requirements is acute and comprehensive. The strategy to do so is in place. Yet it requires the participation of all concerned to achieve substantial results. The border between Oregon and Washington is a hurdle we need to face as we address the region's requirements. The Vancouver and Clark County segments of this system will be put in place when the citizens of Vancouver and Clark County are ready. Their choice is not ours to make. The choice before us is one of establishing the core segment of the South/North Light Rail line that will operate in concert with the East/West Light Rail line to serve and shape this region.

## **2. Clackamas Town Center**

Tri-Met and Metro representatives say the purpose for providing light rail service to Clackamas Town Center is to shape the development of this future major regional center into a higher density, much less automobile-dependent, community of mixed residential, employment, and commercial uses. Metro, Clackamas County, and the new owners of Clackamas Town Center have developed a detailed master plan for redevelopment of a large area of Clackamas Town Center, which will include new streets, higher-density, and more urban-style development along the light rail line. This plan is scheduled for formal approval later this fall. Westside MAX opened in mid-September and has already led to 7,000 new housing units along its alignment. A similar opportunity exists in the vicinity of the line to Clackamas Town Center where over 400 acres of open land awaits development. A light rail extension to Clackamas Town Center would also serve the area of the region where Metro anticipates the fastest growth and the most significant expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary.

## **3. Downtown**

Citizens for Better Transit believe the Downtown alignment on the Transit Mall will constrain capacity based upon train sizes limited by the 200-foot block dimensions (trains could never be longer than their current size of two articulated cars.) They propose an alternative of crossing the Willamette over the

## BALLOT MEASURE STUDY

Hawthorne Bridge and proceeding down First Avenue. This would serve as an interim step that anticipates future alignment of the South/North line in subway tunnels under downtown. This would allow all stations along the line to be expanded for longer trains and thus increase the capacity of the system. A Hawthorne Bridge/First Avenue alignment would also reduce costs and assist in shifting money north to extend the line to the Vancouver Transit Center.

Tri-Met and Metro representatives say tunneling is much more expensive than the current proposal, highly disruptive, and not necessary for the foreseeable future. Someday tunneling may indeed be necessary in concert with other strategies but that day is probably at least thirty years away. Keeping the trains on grade also contributes to a vital street level pedestrian activity zone. Furthermore, the proposal is supported by the business community, is consistent with downtown planning, and adheres to the principle of creating a more livable and attractive community.

The modifications Tri-Met proposes to the transit mall involve having light rail stops at four block intervals and bus stops at three block intervals instead of the current two blocks. The light rail tracks would be in the current auto lanes and the stops would occur where the auto lanes are currently blocked by projecting sidewalks. Automobiles could continue to use these lanes between stops. The spacing of the light rail and bus stops will be such that no bus stops will occur in the same block as a light rail stop. This allows for two lanes of bus traffic adjacent to a light rail through stop. Buses will make fewer stops slightly further apart and will each spend less time on the transit mall, thus speeding up their trip times.

Tri-Met and Metro representatives say the Hawthorne Bridge option proposed by Citizens for Better Transit has two problems: 1. it is the most frequently opened span on the river; and 2. with two large counterweights suspended high in the bridge framework there is concern about what may happen in a seismic event. They believe that although the Hawthorne Bridge can work well for a trolley line it could not adequately serve the South/North line. Tri-Met representatives also told the committee that a Hawthorne Bridge crossing would eliminate service to Portland State University. The Caruthers Crossing bridge would be a fixed span with no need to open for river traffic.

Tri-Met and Metro representatives say the proposed First Avenue alignment has two drawbacks: 1) at the point where the South/North line would overlap with the East/West line on the same tracks, it would actually lead to delays on both lines almost immediately and therefore limit the passenger carrying capacity of both lines; 2) this alignment also fails to provide ready access to

transfers to bus lines on the transit mall. A First Avenue alignment would also eliminate service to Portland State University. The increased distance from the higher density employment core of downtown may lead to lower ridership than the proposed alignment along the transit mall.

### **C. Is this the right time to proceed with such a plan?**

The growth this area is anticipating will shape the character of the region for the next century and beyond. This is an important time in the development of American cities in general and for the Portland metropolitan area in particular. We have matured. We can sense what is of value to us. We can sense the importance of recognizing and responding to windows of opportunity in a timely manner as the region develops.

Tri-Met and Metro representatives say until both the East/West and the South/North lines are in place, we will have light rail lines, individual elements not a full network, not a system that can offer comprehensive service to the region. In order to be the most effective, this system needs to have its East/West and South/North cores established in time to shape the patterns of development around them. We learned that lesson from the east-side line—where MAX was constructed after much of the surrounding development and infrastructure was already in place, and applied it successfully on the Westside line—where the development of light rail has been accompanied by extensive new transit-oriented development. Now it is time to apply this lesson to the South/North line.

The budget for the currently proposed version of South/North Light Rail is smaller because the project is smaller. The Vancouver and Clark County segments of both the system and the budget have been eliminated following the 1995 election. The 1996 defeat of the state of Oregon funding package for the 1994 proposal resulted in the development of a strategy to fund the South/North line without state money. This meant that project costs would have to be significantly reduced. Tri-Met and Metro representatives say the current proposal is the result of an intensive review of the cost of the project which focused upon providing the most service and impact upon the region's transportation and land use planning issues within the available funding. Tri-Met and Metro representatives, and other community leaders in the region, believe that this is a reasonable and prudent allocation of tax dollars.

Four years ago the voters of the region approved by a two to one margin the original \$475M South/North proposal. It takes a long time to bring these

## BALLOT MEASURE STUDY

systems on-line. In September, Westside light rail opened— twelve years after the opening of the Eastside line. We have, in the past, had the benefit of influential members of Congress who could assist in directing federal funding to these projects. Now we have a fresh delegation, and it will take significant time for them to become as influential. Federal funding is becoming harder to come by while the number of projects being proposed, and thus competition for those funds, has increased four-fold.

Tri-Met and Metro representatives say this region has a proven track record of integrating cost effective light rail systems with innovative land use planning policies. The demonstrated ability to generate strong local support for these systems and policies is a major asset, particularly when seeking federal funding. We have the opportunity to ride that success into the coming funding cycle. If we hesitate, we may well lose the momentum for federal funding and for establishing the core of the network in time to serve our needs and to shape our future. The federal funding available for projects such as this is allocated in six year cycles, one of which is just beginning. If this measure does not pass in all likelihood we would drop out of contention for the funding currently allocated.

Citizens for Better Transit believe that an alternate plan involving going to Vancouver, going to Milwaukie but not Clackamas Town Center and using the Hawthorne Bridge and First Avenue alignment could be built with the original 1994 funding. The argument is that at least token service is provided to Vancouver/Clark County and Clackamas County as per the original measure. However, the voters of Clark County have spoken clearly that they are not ready for light rail at this time and Clackamas County citizens would not have an alignment that served the areas of greatest anticipated growth in their community. There is very little likelihood that a political mandate could be achieved for such a proposal and, if it could, a high likelihood that it would be challenged in the courts and delayed for some time if not overturned. The viability of this proposal seems questionable, and commitment to it by the City of Vancouver, Clark County and C-Tran current does not exist.

Tri-Met and Metro representatives say that a much more likely outcome of a defeat of the measure would be to pause and enter into a period of reflection. If, in fact, the voters do not support using light rail to address the region's transit and land-use issues, then what is it that they would rather have? This uncertainty would probably lead to a significant delay in implementing any proposal to address regional transit and congestion issues, whether it involves light rail or not.

Your committee is concerned that, during this delay, the growth and congestion

this measure is intended to address would continue unabated. The consequences could be staggering. The planning has been done and has broad-based public support. We are at midstream in the implementation process and significant federal funding is available, for the time being. Yet, we have not accomplished enough for the outcome to be secure. This is an important time to take stock and an important time to take action. The opportunity to create a comprehensive rail system may not occur again for decades.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The South/North Light Rail Project is a matter of great importance to the future of the region. It is a step that would establish a cornerstone segment of the light rail system. This would provide service in each of the cardinal directions from the Downtown core, serve a much broader spectrum of the region and its population, and it would provide much greater opportunity for connecting trips. It would also put in place a vital component of: the State Transportation Plan; the Regional Transportation Plan; the Metro 2040 Plan; The Downtown Plan; and the local planning efforts of every jurisdiction it engages. In particular, this includes Clackamas County, which is anticipating both expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary and significant new development in the coming years.

Opponents denounce light rail as too expensive and ineffective at moving people. Many of us have traveled to other cities that have a quality of life we admire and aspire to develop in our own metropolitan area. Most of those cities are served by light rail or subway systems that enhance this quality of urban life. Our region needs transportation pathways separate from our existing roadway system, that provide an effective alternative to our increasingly congested roads. We must decide what we want our metropolitan area to become. What is our vision for the future? What can we do today that will lead to its fulfillment? This is our decision to make.

We do not realistically have an option to do nothing. The key task before us is to select a response that implements the planning we have done, is cost effective both initially and over its operating life, and helps to shape the development of our region. The ability of light rail to move significant numbers of people at a lower operating cost combined with its ability to shape the development of our region convinces us that it is both a viable and desirable response to our land use and transportation challenges.

The planning processes in our region emphasize two key components: 1) local

involvement and 2) linking of land use and transportation decisions as long-range visions for our communities are formed. The balance between these components is an essential ingredient in achieving a plan that will both meet our needs and endure over time.

Several challenges to the current proposal have arisen, complete with alternative proposals. In our review of these proposals, we found that they incorporate technical or political aspects that render them not viable. We regret that it was not possible for the current South/North Light Rail proposal to serve to the highly congested Vancouver/Portland corridor. However, we believe it would be a mistake to delay development of the rest of the system until Vancouver and Clark County are ready to proceed.

Your committee believes that South/North Light Rail is a vital step in establishing a transportation network that truly serves the region. This is indeed the time to proceed with this project.



## VI. RECOMMENDATION

Your Committee unanimously recommends a YES vote on Tri-Met Measure 26-74.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bergstein

Jim Gorter

Paul Millius

Dennis Schweitzer

Brian Teller

Kent Duffy, vice chair

Leslie Hildula, chair

Tomm Pickles, research advisor

Paul Leistner, research director

## VI. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: WITNESS LIST

Bob Stacey, director of planning, Tri-Met

Bernie Bottomly, Yes on 26-74 Campaign

Tom Walsh, executive director, Tri-Met

Sharon Kelly, transportation planning supervisor, Metro

Andy Catugno, transportation director, Metro

Steve Buckstein, president, Cascade Policy Institute

John Charles, environmental policy director, Cascade Policy Institute

Ray Polani, Citizens for Better Transit

Jim Howell, Citizens for Better Transit

## APPENDIX B: RESOURCE MATERIALS

### Metro:

- Steering Committee recommends building full-length light rail route, July 1998.
- Locally Preferred Strategy Final Report, July 23, 1998.
- South/North Corridor Project: DEIS Executive Summary, April 1998.
- South/North Corridor Project: Briefing Document, March 20, 1998.
- South/North Corridor Project: Draft Environmental Impact Statement, February 1998.

### Tri-Met:

- Resolution 98-08-52: Tri-Met Resolution to Seek Voter Approval of Bonds to Match Federal Funds to Build the South/North MAX Light Rail Line, August 5, 1998.
- "Benefits of the South/North Light Rail Project," August 1998.
- "Tri-Met's Initial Technical Comments on Richmond Paper."
- Fact sheet, "MAX—Metropolitan Area Express"
- "Response to Cascade Policy Institute 'Top Ten Myths'"

### Cascade Policy Institute:

- "Top Ten Light Rail Myths."
- "Low-Cost Solutions to Portland's Traffic Problems: Congestion Pricing and Free-Market Transit," March 1998.

### Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates:

- "AORTA opposes design of South/North light rail project," March 1996.
- "AORTA opposes South/North project funding, Ballot Measure 32," September 1996.
- "AORTA pushes for cost-effective S/N alignment," March 1998.

Atlas Oregon PAC. "Ten Reasons to Not Build the South/North Light Rail," and "Ten Myths about the South/North Light Rail," September 1998.

Bottomly, Bernie. memo to Paul Leistner regarding cost of busways, light rail operating costs, ridership capacity of South/North Light Rail, September 4, 1998.

Citizen's for Better Transit. "Fundamentals of Successful Transit," January 1976

Editorial. "Light rail still right track," *Oregonian*, July 12, 1998.

Howell, Jim. "Don't let South/North light rail die," *Oregonian*, December 7, 1997.

Oliver, Gordon. "National light rail opponent attacks Portland's MAX system," *Oregonian*, May 5, 1996.

Oliver, Gordon. "Harvard transit study gives black mark to light rail," *Oregonian*, July 8, 1998.

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Oregon Department of Transportation. Memo on cost of six-lane highway from Clackamas Town Center to downtown Portland, July 7, 1995.

Perlman, Ellen. "The Little Engine that Might," *Governing*, August 1998.

Reinhard, David. (editorial) "Light rail come-on lines," *Oregonian*, July 12, 1998.

Rufolo, Anthony M. (opinion piece) "Light-rail snow job chugs along," *Oregonian*, August 24, 1998.

Selected packet of newspaper articles on light rail from 1995 to 1998.

Shouten, Dick. "Public transit's real value is improved local livability," *Oregonian*, August 20, 1998.

Young, Bob. "The Rumble that Wasn't," *Willamette Week*, 8/5/98.

## **APPENDIX C: MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOUTH/NORTH CORRIDOR STEERING COMMITTEE**

Steering Committee Chair: Councilor Ed Washington, Metro Council

Mayor Dan Fowler, City of Oregon City

Commissioner Charlie Hales, City of Portland

Commissioner Gary Hansen, Multnomah County

Commissioner Ed Lindquist, Clackamas County

Interim Mayor Don Graf, City of Milwaukie

Mayor Royce Pollard, City of Vancouver, Regional Transportation Council

Ted Spence, acting administrator, Region 1, Oregon Department of Transportation

Don Wagner, administrator, District 1, Washington State Department of Transportation

Donald S. McClave, Tri-Met Board

## APPENDIX D: CASCADE POLICY INSTITUTE CRITICISM OF LIGHT RAIL AND TRI-MET RESPONSES

Below is a list of specific criticisms of light rail provided to your committee by the Cascade Policy Institute ("Top Ten Light Rail Myths") and Tri-Met's responses to these criticisms. The Cascade Policy Institute first published these criticisms as part of its opposition to 1996 Measure 32, and provided the list to the committee as a summary of their continuing concerns with the current South/North Light Rail proposal.

### 1. Light rail will reduce traffic congestion.

**CASCADE:** Eastside MAX light rail went online in 1986. Yet between 1986 and 1992 Portland area traffic congestion grew faster than other Western cities, including Seattle, which has no light rail. Simultaneously, Tri-Met's share of work trips steadily declined, dropping by one-third from 1980 to 1990. Even in absolute numbers, Tri-Met carried about 10,000 fewer commuters to work in 1990 than it did in 1980—this during a decade that saw over 97,000 jobs added in the Tri-County area.

**TRI-MET:** This question basically asks, has the Eastside light rail been successful. The numbers indicate that it has been a resounding success.

- Eastside MAX carries nearly 32,000 trips each weekday.
- Ridership on light rail has grown 60% since opening
- Overall, Tri-Met ridership is up 70,000 rides per day since MAX opened.
- Ridership on MAX is growing faster than auto trips on the Banfield, up 28% between 1989 and 1997.
- Since 1990, Tri-Met ridership has grown faster than transit service, population, or vehicle use—perhaps the only city in the country where this is true.

- The Texas study cited in the “myth” does not actually measure congestion. Instead, it measures road miles compared to vehicle use. The Portland region which has emphasized transit and land use planning over the construction of new freeways, will always get a “low” ranking in the Texas study which emphasizes road construction above all other options.

[NOTE: The committee did not hear from anyone who claimed that light rail would reduce congestion from its current levels. Instead, they stated that light rail would reduce the rate at which congestion worsened and would provide a transportation alternative that would bypass congested roadways.]

## **2. Light Rail will improve air quality.**

**CASCADE:** Tri-Met’s own environmental impact study for Westside MAX, now under construction, says it will have virtually no effect on the region’s air quality. This is not surprising, since light rail takes so few cars off the road (see Myths #1 and #6).

**TRI-MET:** Portland’s light rail system is an important part of the region’s adopted federal air quality strategy. Portland has had tremendous success in reducing air pollution over the last 20 years. However, as the recent clean air action alert days showed, we can not take our success for granted. South/North Light Rail will reduce air pollution by 485 tons per year and will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20,000 tons per year by 2015.

[NOTE: Again, the committee did not hear from anyone who claimed that light rail would reduce the current amount of air pollution generated by vehicles on the roadways. Light rail supporters do claim that light rail will help reduce the rate at which air pollution will increase as the region’s population grows.]

## **3. The South/North Light Rail line will carry more than 60,000 riders a day.**

**CASCADE:** When Tri-Met received federal funds approval for the Eastside, it said MAX would carry 42,500 daily riders by 1990. In May, 1995 Tri-Met reported less than 31,000 daily riders, including one-way trips and free trips in fareless square downtown. U.S. Census data in 1990 showed only about 2,500 daily commuters used Eastside MAX.

**TRI-MET:** MAX ridership is at an all time high of 32,000 rides per day. A 20-year-old estimate, conducted during the OPEC oil crisis, did predict higher ridership on Eastside light rail. However, a subsequent estimate predicted ridership with extraordinary accuracy. Portland's ridership analysis is considered to be among the best in the country by the Federal Transit Administration and others.

#### **4. Travel on light rail will be faster than in a car.**

**CASCADE:** Early forecasts for Eastside MAX claimed it would make the trip from Gresham to Downtown Portland in about 35 minutes. In 1994, actual travel times averaged 49 minutes. That doesn't count the time most passengers take to drive or ride feeder buses to park-and-ride stations, or the time spent waiting for the train to arrive. This is often slower than cars, and slower than commuter buses.

**TRI-MET:** Travel time. Light rail travels in exclusive right-of-way in the most congested areas of the South/North corridor. This allows trains to avoid congestion, stay on time and move quickly. Travel time from Clackamas Town Center and the Kenton area of north Portland will be 30% faster than by car during rush hours in 2015. Because South/North light rail will reduce auto trips by 6.3 million in the corridor, it will also result in a 9 percent faster trip for auto users. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) found that light rail was significantly faster than the best bus alternatives.

[NOTE: A key issue here is not so much the comparison between light rail and automobile travel times today, but whether light rail travel will be significantly faster than automobile travel in the future as congestion on the roadways increases.]

#### **5. South/North Light Rail will create 3,000 jobs per year over 20 years.**

**CASCADE:** Any jobs created by this project must be offset by those jobs lost or not created in the private sector as \$1 billion to \$3 billion is moved from the private to the public sector. If light rail doesn't achieve its goals, its jobs will burden taxpayers for decades.

**TRI-MET:** The Westside Light Rail project created more than 6 million hours of construction work during construction. The South/North project is expected to generate a similar amount of work during its construction.

## 6. Light rail will improve mobility for freight and goods movement.

**CASCADE:** This is only true if light rail takes significant numbers of cars off the roads. It doesn't. Prior to 1992, Tri-Met claimed that Eastside MAX kept 10,000 cars off the road. The actual number is almost certainly less than 2,000. And the overall effect of MAX in peak hours was to take NO cars off the road, because a higher proportion of people left the transit system than entered it between 1980 and 1990.

**TRI-MET:** South/North Light Rail will reduce auto trips in the South/North corridor by 6.3 million trips per year by 2015. South/North will improve travel time for auto and truck trips by 9% during rush hour, reducing the congestion related cost of freight and goods movement.

## 7. Oregon's South/North line money will leverage \$2.375 billion in federal, local and Washington state dollars. [NOTE: This amount applied to the 1994 South/North Light Rail proposal.]

**CASCADE:** Only Portland area voters have approved funding. Washington voters overwhelmingly rejected paying their share. If federal dollars ever flow to this project, they will come out of taxpayer pockets somewhere else. This kind of leverage is what the balanced budget battles in Washington, D.C. are all about.

**TRI-MET:** The South/North finance plan calls for half the cost of South/North construction, \$866 million, to come from federal funds. These funds, generated by transportation related taxes and fees, are available only for light rail or similar projects. If Portland does not receive these funds, they will be allocated to one of the 75-plus other cities around the country seeking federal funds for light rail construction.

## 8. South/North Light Rail will provide Transit Oriented Developments to help accommodate the region's growing population.

**CASCADE:** The "father" of transit oriented development (TODs) is Peter Calthorpe. His showpiece development south of Sacramento, Laguna West, is arguably a failure. Transit usage is minimal. The only commercial site within a one-mile radius, ironically, is a quick oil change firm. Light rail has operated in Portland for eight years, and areas around its stations were planned for heavy density before it opened, yet only one near-TOD exists (at 162nd

## BALLOT MEASURE STUDY

Avenue). There, a study of resident travel patterns shows they use their cars virtually as much as those without easy access to MAX. This is no fluke. In spite of Oregon's land use laws, a growing body of research suggests that transit projects such as light rail have little impact on living and work location patterns.

**TRI-MET:** \$1.9 billion in investment has occurred adjacent to the Eastside Light Rail Line. On the Westside Light Rail, more than 7,000 housing units have been constructed or permitted and more than \$500 million in business and commercial development has occurred along the alignment.

**9. Transportation needs in Central, Southern and Eastern Oregon can be helped by the additional \$375 million transit funding package. [NOTE: Not applicable under Measure 26-74.]**

**10. South-North Light Rail will be the largest construction project in Oregon history.**

**CASCADE:** Unfortunately, this is no myth.

**TRI-MET:** Construction of the interstate highway system was probably the largest construction program in Oregon's history.





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